

Budget Process

The budget process is designed to conform with state law, the city charter, and the legislative code. The process to develop the budget commences in February.

January - March

The budget for 2002 is finalized during this time. This includes preparing, printing and distributing books reflecting the 2002 adopted budget. The accounting section of the Office of Financial Services prepares the annual financial report for the previous year (2001). During this time, the “base budget” for the upcoming year (2003) is identified.

April - June

Forms, instructions, printouts and the mayor’s guidelines are distributed to departments. These tools are used to plan for and develop operating budgets. Department management and staff identify objectives, performance indicators and the resources needed to accomplish goals. Services are reviewed to determine purpose, need and cost-saving ideas.

Department requests are submitted to the Office of Financial Services in June. After that, each department’s budget is analyzed by the OFS budget staff. The mayor meets with the department directors to discuss their needs, and to ensure that budgets meet the service level and taxing objectives that have been established for the city.

July - September

The budget staff finalizes the mayor’s recommendations and produces the mayor’s proposed budget. The mayor then submits the recommended budget to the city council by August 15, as required by the city charter.

In August, the city council begins reviewing the mayor’s proposed budget. The council holds meetings with department directors, management and staff to obtain a clear understanding of the department’s goals, service priorities and objectives that are represented in the proposed budget. As required by state law, the city council sets the *maximum* property tax levy in September. Governmental units can adjust budgets, resulting in property taxes that are less than, but not more than, the maximum levy.

October - December

The city council holds public hearings on the budget. Ramsey County mails property tax statements to property owners indicating the *maximum* amount of property taxes that the owner will be required to pay. These statements also indicate when the “Truth in Taxation” public hearings will be held. State law requires the city to hold a joint meeting with the county and school district. This meeting is held in early December. The city council then adopts a budget and tax levy for the city. The adopted budget represents changes made by the city council to the mayor’s proposed budget. The mayor has line-item veto authority over the council-adopted budget.